

CHANGING SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCENARIO OF FCV TOBACCO FARMERS IN NLS AREA OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Tobacco is one of the important cash crops cultivated by a substantial portion of the farmers (9,945 FCV & 5,000 Non-FCV) in Northern Light Soil (NLS) region of Andhra Pradesh. The objective of the present study is to examine the changing trend in the socio-economic conditions of the tobacco farmers in NLS area from 1980 onwards. After introduction of high yielding varieties like Mc Nair-12 and Kanchan in NLS area by Central Tobacco Research Institute, Rajahmundry, there is a significant improvement in the yields and net returns of tobacco farmers thereby benefiting them economically. There is a gradual increase in the average price of tobacco during the past four years and the price level reached its peak in the past two years (Rs.99.09 & Rs.128.25). A total of 10 villages and hundred farmers (ten from each village) were selected based on purposive random sampling method. The study revealed that there is a significant change in the socio-economic status of the FCV tobacco farmers in NLS area over a period of thirty years.

Key words: Socio-economic conditions, Assets possessed, Farm mechanization, Social participation.

INTRODUCTION

Tobacco is an important commercial crop generating about Rs. 13,853 crores as excise revenue and Rs. 4,402 crores as foreign exchange to the country and providing livelihood to six million tobacco farmers in India (CTRI News, 2010). The study examines the improvement in the socio economic status of the Flue Cured Virginia tobacco farmers in NLS area over a period of thirty years. The study was undertaken with an objective to examine the changing trend in the socio-economic conditions of the tobacco farmers in NLS area.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 10 villages and hundred registered tobacco farmers (ten from each village) from NLS area were selected based on purposive random sampling method. The socio-economic data were obtained and analyzed for the six block years 1980-85, 1985-90, 1990-95, 1995-2000, 2000-05, 2005-10. The respondent farmers were interviewed and the socio-economic data were collected on various

parameters viz., assets possessed (pucca house, agricultural land procured, house sites, gold and silver, four wheelers etc.); material possession (comforts, entertainment, electronic goods, latest furniture etc.); agricultural implements (traditional implements, latest implements etc.); social participation (membership in farmer clubs, panchayats, other associations, mass media exposure (news paper and agricultural magazines etc.) over a period of 30 years.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were collected pertinent to socio-economic variables viz., annual family income, assets possessed, agricultural implements, social participation and mass media exposure from the respondent farmers of NLS region. The findings are presented in the three tables. The study revealed that there were only large and small farmers but no marginal farmer in NLS region.

1. Assets possessed : Data regarding assets possessed by the tobacco farmers are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Assets possessed by the respondent farmers.

N=100

Assets possessed	1980-85(%)	1985-90 (%)	1990-95 (%)	1995-2000(%)	2000-05 (%)	2005-10(%)
Pucca house	20	42	30	08	-	-
Ag. land procured	08	12	14	20	22	24
House sites	-	-	-	9	12	14
Gold & silver	06	12	14	18	24	26
Four wheelers	2	2	4	6	8	11
Telephone, Cell phone, Fans, Over-head tank etc	12	20	28	42	-	-
Radio, T.V., Stereo etc.	12	18	22	48	-	-
Computer, A.C., etc.	-	-	-	4	4	10
Latest furniture & Kitchen equipment (Refrigerator, Washing machine etc.)	-	4	12	16	22	26

The study revealed that majority of the farmers (42%) possessed pucca house during 1985-90 and purchased land, gold ornaments and four wheelers from the block year 1990-95 onwards. The study further indicated that the assets were created because of the high socio-economic standard achieved by the farmers as a result of increased production and price of tobacco during these block years. A majority of farmers gave importance to comforts and entertainment up to the block 1995-2000. During the last block *viz.*, 2005-10, farmers started giving importance to electronic goods. About 10 per cent of the farmers purchased electronic goods and 26% purchased latest furniture.

2. Farm Mechanization : The data concerning trend of shift towards farm mechanization of tobacco farmers are presented in Table 2.

This showed that there was a technological advancement among FCV tobacco growers.

3. Social Participation : The data regarding participation of tobacco farmers in various social institutions in terms of membership are recorded in Table 3.

The Table 3 shows that the involvement of farmers in various village organizations has been gradually increasing from 1980 onwards. As regards mass media exposure, farmers reading news papers increased to the extent of 92% during the block year 2005-10. This indicated that the scientific and technological awareness of the farmers was increasing along with the social participation.

CONCLUSION

The study has clearly indicated that there is a significant improvement in the socio-economic

TABLE 2. Farm equipment purchased by tobacco farmers.

N=100

Material possessed	1980-85 (%)	1985-90 (%)	1990-95 (%)	1995-2000(%)	2000-05 (%)	2005-10 (%)
Traditional Implements (tractors, gorru, guntaka markers weeders and crowbars)	24	32	40	-	-	-
Latest Ag. Implements (Sprinklers, sprayers etc.)	-	-	12	18	22	30

The Table 2 shows that a majority of the farmers (40%) procured traditional implements during 1990-95. By this block year, almost all the farmers were fully equipped with traditional implements. With the gradual increase of annual income, a total of 82% of NLS tobacco farmers were using latest agricultural implements like sprayers, sprinklers etc. from 1990-95 block year onwards.

standard of tobacco farmers in NLS area of Andhra Pradesh. After introduction of high yielding varieties like Mc Nair and Kanchan by CTTRI in NLS area, the yields gradually increased up to an extent of 20-25 quintals per ha from the earlier situation (15-20 q/ha). There is a gradual increase in the average price of tobacco during the past four years and the price level reached its peak in the past two years

TABLE 3. Membership of farmer respondents in various social institutions.

N=100

Particulars	1980-85 (%)	1985-90 (%)	1990-95 (%)	1995-2000(%)	2000-05 (%)	2005-10 (%)
Farmer clubs	--	8	10	28	32	56
Panchayats	02	06	16	24	28	28
Other Associations	-	-	-	-	02	04
News paper	28	35	49	65	81	92
Agricultural magazine	-	-	10	18	32	56

(Rs.99.09 & Rs.128.25). Spectacular progressive change was observed during the block year 2005-10, where the farmers were benefited economically. The study revealed that there was a gradual increase

in terms of assets possessed, farm mechanization, social participation and mass media exposure due to the increased production and prices of tobacco over a period of thirty years.

REFERENCE

CTRI News letter (2010). Central Tobacco Research Institute, Rajahmundry. Volume 32, No.(3) pp.1.